



Capitol Connection with Gov. David Ige is a regular e-newsletter that provides you with updates from the fifth floor of the State Capitol. As the governor's office works to become paperless, the newsletter will be available on-line and via subscription. Check out the governor's website at [governor.hawaii.gov](http://governor.hawaii.gov) to subscribe to this newsletter. Also, follow the governor on Twitter and Instagram @govhawaii and check [www.facebook.com/GovernorDavidIge](https://www.facebook.com/GovernorDavidIge) for daily activities.

## From the Governor: Creating more livable communities

*Traffic relief. More vibrant communities. Transit-oriented development (TOD) and affordable housing. The Ige administration is tackling these issues and getting people involved at a grassroots planning level. In this issue, Governor Ige talks about transportation challenges, future funding and their connection to community planning.*

### Q. Why did you launch the Kalihi 21<sup>st</sup> Century initiative?

A. The Kalihi 21<sup>st</sup> Century vision team on O'ahu was created because of the opportunity for transit-oriented development and the fact that there would be a station right at the site of the O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC). The jail is overcrowded and its design makes it difficult and expensive for us to operate. This is an opportunity to envision the Kalihi area in a new way. We've talked a lot about Kaka'ako and how so much of the development was focused on luxury condominiums. Kalihi 21<sup>st</sup> Century is our opportunity to reinvest in our community, to look at state assets along the rail line and provide more community benefits and housing for our residents.

### Q. Why is it important to involve residents at the start of the planning process?

A. In the past, communities may have been impacted but not involved in planning their future. In Kalihi, with OCCC potentially relocating, we can look at the state parcels in that area, as well as along the transit corridor, to see what synergy we can get. We want to work with the community to see what their priorities and needs are. Most importantly, we want people and agencies working together to see how we can leverage state assets. (See Page 2 for more on Kalihi 21.)

### Q. What do you want people to know about the need to replenish the state's highway fund?

A. Many people don't know that, over the years, the state Department of Transportation's highway division (HDOT) has been funded locally only through the gas tax and user fees, not General Fund tax dollars. The fees cover salaries, highway maintenance, emergency repairs to roads and bridges, capacity projects, and matching monies for major federal highway grants. These revenues are going down as people drive less or use electric cars while the cost of building and maintaining roads keeps going up. With all these needs, we don't have enough funds to expand roadways. That's why we're focusing on maintenance and more economical ways we can relieve traffic congestion through restriping, contraflow, and using shoulder lanes during peak hours.

### Q. When we have federal money in the "pipeline," can we shift some of those funds to cover other costs?

A. We can't because they're already committed to specific major projects. If we shift them, then we're in trouble with the federal government. In the past, the state would commit to these bigger capacity projects because the community demanded it. Once we get the federal funds, we have to provide the state funding, usually on an 80/20 split. If a project is delayed, the funds are already committed. (See Page 3 for more on HDOT's progress.)



(top) Gov. Ige at the launch of the Kalihi 21<sup>st</sup> Century initiative. (above) HDOT crews handle tree trimming on Likelike Highway.

# Native Hawaiian families pick DHHL lots for new homes

It was a day for celebrating at a ceremony last month as dozens of families chose Hawaiian homestead lots in the Kaka'ina subdivision in Waimānalo. The 44 lots are part of the most recent Department of Hawaiian Home Lands project. A sister subdivision finished last summer is also home to 45 Native Hawaiian families.

"The real focus is meeting the mission of returning Native Hawaiians to the land," said Gov. Ige. "I'm proud that this administration has supported DHHL this year with the highest level of funding for the department."

DHHL deputy director William Aila, Jr. added, "This will be a milestone in many people's lives today. Going forward there will be challenges, but good challenges because in the end, you will have your hale."



A happy family with DHHL director Jobie Masagatani (left) and Gov. Ige at the Kaka'ina lot selection in Waimānalo.

# Kalihi 21st Century: Public meetings to plan a 'smart growth' future

Suppose someone asked you to dream — to dream big, to envision your ideal community. What would it include? More affordable housing? More parks and better schools? More services close to home?

That's what Gov. Ige and the state Office of Planning is asking residents to do as part of his Kalihi 21<sup>st</sup> Century initiative. The committee that includes legislators, community leaders, and non-profit representatives is holding a series of public meetings to imagine a new Kalihi — with rail and without the 100-year-old jail, the O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC).



The governor with the Kalihi 21st Century Vision Team he initiated to gather ideas for improving the community.

The next public meeting is set for 6 p.m. Nov. 15 in Farrington High's cafeteria. It will be co-hosted by the architecture and planning firm PBR Hawaii & Associates to gather ideas for a "vision concept" for Kalihi. "It's not a plan, but a vision of what the community wants," explained state planning director Leo Asuncion. "We hope to have a draft vision by January 2017. Planning for a possible relocation of the jail is moving parallel to that. The visioning process will continue, regardless of what happens with OCCC."

The jail sits on 16 acres of state-owned land in Kalihi, between two proposed rail stations. Often, he said, the community doesn't have a chance to weigh in at the beginning of what is usually a complex planning process. "The governor wanted to get more community members involved, thinking about the possibilities at the outset — to hear what they'd like to see and to talk to each other, to make connections within their own Kalihi community," he said.



A visual notetaker outlines Kalihi 21st Century ideas.

And what about the future of rail? "The Kalihi property is also a candidate for **transit-oriented development (TOD)**," said Asuncion. "Rail is definitely a driver for planning, but the state property is still going to be there, whether rail comes in or not." In fact, a separate interagency TOD council has been formed to coordinate development along the whole 20-mile rail corridor, with the state of Hawai'i as the largest landowner of about 2,000 acres within a half-mile radius of the 21 stations.

TOD has been described as a tool for achieving "smart growth," defined as compact, mixed-use, walkable communities reachable by transportation other than a car — whether it's a bike, bus or rail. It can be applied to large urban areas such as Kaka'ako or neighbor island towns such as Lihū'e, Kaua'i, where Mayor Bernard Cravalho is promoting smart growth.

"It's all about what's right for a community," said Asuncion. "The key is changing people's mindsets — weaning folks from their cars." He said that takes time, which is why the Kalihi 21<sup>st</sup> Century committee is meeting now. "As a planner, 10 years out is the typical timeline. You don't just march into the Legislature, get funds and build. Residential development, especially in a TOD area, takes time. If we don't start talking now, it could be a problem down the line when we want to do something (with a parcel of land), but we have no idea what we want. That's why we need the community to be part of the vision."



# HDOT: Stretching highway dollars to meet demands

We've probably all been there — fighting traffic gridlock, avoiding potholes and wondering what the state Department of Transportation (HDOT) is doing about our roads. The answer is they're doing plenty, despite a shrinking revenue stream and rising construction and maintenance costs.

Highways Division deputy director Ed Sniffen says the department is working hard to find cost-effective ways to improve roads and relieve congestion while addressing concerns that the state incurs high costs but still ranks low on road quality.

"Costs are higher for Hawai'i overall, but in FY 2016 we've lowered the administrative cost per mile from \$46,621 to \$18,694. That's a significant improvement," Sniffen said. "That means focusing more on preservation and safety of the roads we have. We are making improvements as soon as possible to maximize funds."

Many people don't know HDOT is a self-sustaining department, meaning no General Fund tax dollars typically go to fund its operations — from filling potholes, clearing debris and repairing bridges to major repaving and "capacity" projects. Costs such as employee salaries and benefits, materials and supplies, professional services, utilities and more are covered by fees collected from drivers or "users" and deposited in the State Highway Fund. This money is in addition to federal funds earmarked for state and county highway projects and bonds sold by the state to finance other highway work.

The challenge is system preservation for a 50-to-60-year old program has historically been underfunded. In addition, revenue from "user fees" such as the gas tax is shrinking as people drive more fuel-efficient and electric cars. That's why HDOT received a \$4 million federal grant for a three-year pilot study to determine the fairest fee system for the future, which may be based on miles traveled rather than on fuel.

For now, HDOT's approach is to find the most cost-effective ways to maintain the state's existing roads, relieve traffic congestion through operational improvements and strategic widening, and complete highway projects on all islands faster to reduce those already in the "pipeline." For instance, to reduce congestion HDOT added contraflow lanes during peak afternoon periods in Nanakuli and is reviewing whether restriping Highway 130 on Hawai'i Island makes sense as a temporary alternative to widening that roadway until the project is ready to be funded and constructed.



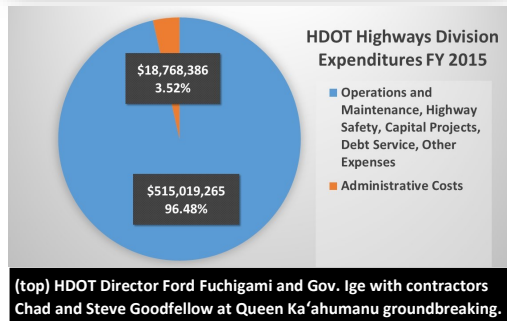
HDOT's Ed Sniffen (left) with public information officers Shelly Kunishige and Tim Sakahara.

HDOT was also recently praised by the Federal Highway Administration for reducing its "pipeline" to the lowest amount in 16 years — a year ahead of schedule. The unexpended balance in the pipeline — as in a checking account — is earmarked for certain projects and can't be shifted to other needs. The state also is obligated to set aside its share of the project funding — usually about 20 percent of the total cost — with federal funds covering 80 percent. States must keep money on hand since they aren't fully reimbursed by the federal government until the work is done.

Sniffen said the reduction was achieved in part because HDOT was able to close 87 projects in fiscal year 2016, in addition to 49 the previous year. These projects have included adding new lanes for commuters, bridge repair and more energy-efficient lighting on highways. Other major ongoing projects range from the long-awaited widening of Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway on Hawai'i Island to the \$53 million Kapolei Interchange on O'ahu. (For updates, go to [hidot.hawaii.gov/highways](http://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways))

**How does HDOT prioritize** what to pave when? Sniffen said the department uses a pavement management system that assesses whole routes for rideability, cracking, rutting and volume, as well as safety hazards and accident rates. "I'm looking for what routes will give us the biggest bang for the buck in repaving." He added this is separate from in-house HDOT staff assigned to refill potholes year-round statewide. HDOT maintains hotlines for the public to report hazards such as downed trees or dangerous potholes on state highways. The hotline numbers by island are: Hawai'i Island, 808-933-8881 (potholes) and 808-933-8878 (all other maintenance issues); Maui, 808-873-3545 (potholes) and 808-873-3535 (all other maintenance issues); O'ahu, 808-536-7852 (potholes) or 808-831-6714 (potholes and other maintenance requests); Kaua'i, 808-241-3000 (follow voice prompts to report potholes or other maintenance issues). To report road issues on city streets on O'ahu, the hotline number is 808-768-7717.

Above all, Sniffen says he wants the public to know that HDOT is committed to doing everything it can to make the most of the funds available. "We're moving projects forward with the resources we have and talking to the community about the future."



(top) HDOT Director Ford Fuchigami and Gov. Ige with contractors Chad and Steve Goodfellow at Queen Ka'ahumanu groundbreaking.

# Hawai'i's top teachers honored at Washington Place

**M**ath teacher Sung Man Park has been coaching winning students at Washington Middle School since 2009. Now it's his turn to be honored as the 2017 State Teacher of the Year. He will go on to represent Hawai'i in the national teacher competition in April.

Park was praised for his dedication to each student's success at a school where nearly 60 percent of the student body is considered economically disadvantaged. Under his coaching, the school's "mathletes" have won the MATHCOUNTS state competition for the last six years, beating out public and private schools. His former students — including those at Yale, Harvard and MIT — return to mentor current students.

"To me, teaching is the greatest and most honorable job in the world because we can change other people's lives," he said.



The state's top teachers with the first lady and Gov. Ige. (right) Award winner Washington Middle math teacher Sung Man Park.

Other finalists were Luane Higuchi, Wai'anae Intermediate; Tracy Idica, 'Aiea High; Kristi Kusunoki, Kailua Intermediate; David Mireles, Kapa'a High; Laurie Ann O'Brien, Kea'au High; Jennifer Suzuki, Maui Waena Intermediate; and Kay Beach, Charter Schools.

## Galera named to BOE

**G**ov. David Ige has appointed former public school teacher and award-winning principal Darrel Galera to the Board of Education. Galera is a school leadership consultant for the Hawai'i Center for Instructional Leadership and currently serves as chair of the governor's ESSA Team (Every Student Succeeds Act).

"Darrel has been instrumental in engaging the public all across the state to help build the blueprint for our public school system," said Gov. Ige. "His service on the board will help bridge the work of the Board of Education and the ESSA Team."

Galera said, "It's truly an honor and a privilege to serve our students and schools. I'm inspired by Gov. Ige's vision for education."

## Connecting with Maui and Moloka'i



(above) On Maui last month, Gov. Ige greeted House Speaker Joe Souki at the Community Connection meeting, then traveled the next day to Watanabe Farm and Produce to talk with Heidi Watanabe. At the Maui Fair, he congratulated the Central Maui Little League All-Stars, World Series Championship winners. On Moloka'i, the governor posed with Pilipo Solatorio, grand marshal of the Festivals of Aloha parade.



At the blessing for Kamakana Villages: (from left) Karen Seddon and Monika Mordasini Rossen of Michaels Development, Gov. Ige, Hawaii County Mayor-elect Harry Kim and Anni Peterson of Better Tomorrows. Renderings of the senior rental housing complex (top) and the family rental housing development in Kailua-Kona. Construction will be completed at the end of 2017.

## More affordable housing for Kona

**T**he Ige administration's push for more affordable rental housing took a major step forward on Hawai'i Island with the blessing of Kamakana Villages at Keahuolu in Kailua-Kona last month. The \$52 million project will provide 170 homes for families and seniors in two separate developments.

"Kamakana Villages is an important part of my administration's focus on providing affordable housing options across the state," said Gov. Ige. The project is a partnership between the Michaels Development Company and the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation.

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